



Columbia Heights Public Schools
Semi-Annual Discipline Report
October 1, 2021

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Summary of Settlement Agreement

Columbia Heights Public School District entered into a settlement agreement with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights on May 22, 2018. This report consists of two sections:

- Progress toward Intended Outcomes as defined in the five strategies
- Appendices
 - Appendix A: Provides additional information and evidence for the Metrics listed in each strategy
 - Appendix B: Suspension data for January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021

The Columbia Heights Public Schools signed the agreement in 2018 and began to implement the five strategies. Every year, the district has continued to scale up its implementation and maintenance of newly adopted practices to make equity visible in our work.

The district has engaged various teams across various departments to ensure that students are served well. The first three strategies have been met fully. Strategy #4 and #5 outcomes are in progress because they require a consistent review of data and dialogue across teams. The results we are observing are showing progress for our district schools. During the pandemic we continued to refine our practices to ensure that our discipline practices were not exclusionary.

The district will continue to develop equitable practices, review policies and support students and families beyond the life of the settlement agreement. To this end members of our district leadership team, school leadership teams participated in the Cultural Responsive School Leadership (CRSL) in August, Restorative Practices (RP) training in August and redesigning of our schools behavior room into a calm and welcoming space for students. The support comes from a grant from Prairie Card funds and Allina Health Clinics to implement a researched based program called A change to Chill.

This report includes data and metrics from January 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

Section One: Strategies

- Intended outcomes
- Specific steps the district took to implement the strategy
- Metrics the District developed to measure the effectiveness of the strategy
- Any changes implemented in light of results in the reporting period.

Columbia Heights Public Schools Strategic Discipline Plan

Goal: To reduce disproportionalities of student suspensions.

Strategy	Progress
Revise District Student Behavior Handbook on Rights and Responsibilities	Outcome met. Every year the district updates the student handbook based on feedback from various stakeholders.
Establish a District Discipline Assessment Team	Outcome met. Every year the District Discipline Assessment team continue to meet and review data and discuss strategies.
Explore possibilities of and funding for a District Discipline Supervisor	Outcome met. The superintendent works with the finance department to support this position.
Provide and/or Expand Professional Development Opportunities for School Personnel in the Area of Cultural Competency.	Ongoing. The district continues to meet its commitment to provide ongoing professional development for staff to promote equitable practices and instruction.
Obtain Qualitative Engagement Data and Input from Parents, Students and Teachers on issues Related to Discipline	Outcome in progress. The teams continue to review data, learn and change practices that support all students in equitably.

Strategy 1: Revise District Student Behavior Handbook on Rights and Responsibilities		
Intended Outcome	Steps	Metrics January to June 2021
<p>To have a comprehensive, E-12 Student Behavior Handbook to be used across all Columbia Heights Public Schools.</p> <p>Outcome met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revision committee was formed and met on June 11, 2018 and June 21, 2018. • A draft of the handbook was shared with the School Board on 8/8/18 • The input was used to make final revisions and the final draft was approved on 8/21/18. • Training was provided to all district and school level administration on 8/15/2018. • Train staff on handbook during the week of 8/27/2018. • Handbook distribution to families took place in Fall 2018 and 2019 and the handbook was posted to the district website. • Handbook continued to be used during distance learning due to COVID19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbia Heights Public Schools Handbook found online at 2020-2021 Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook (calameo.com)

Strategy 2: Establish a District Discipline Assessment Team		
Intended Outcome	Steps	Metrics January to June 2021
<p>To understand and reduce disproportionalities of student suspensions in order to maintain a safe and orderly educational environment.</p> <p>Outcome met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish a District-wide Admin Discipline Assessment Team to work in conjunction with School Leadership Teams ● The District-wide Admin Discipline Assessment Team will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ review and analyze monthly suspension data ○ review reports from school Leadership Teams ○ engage in PLC discussions around suspension data disaggregated by race, ethnicity and disability ○ review DIRS reporting process and discuss subjectivity/objectivity of DIRS categories that lead to suspension such as bullying, harassment, disruptive/disorderly conduct/insubordination and other. ○ be responsible for the semi-annual reports to MDHR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District-wide Admin Discipline Assessment Team (DDAT) membership list & presentations are listed in Appendix A ● Monthly suspension data was reviewed by the DDAT ● Semi-annual reports is prepared using data reviewed by the DDAT ● Final report submitted October 1, 2021.

Strategy 3: Explore possibilities of and funding for a District Discipline Supervisor		
Intended Outcome	Steps	Metrics January to June 2021
<p>Determine if the position of Discipline Supervisor is financially feasible and sustainable for the district, or if the oversight of this position can be embedded within the job descriptions of existing positions in the district.</p> <p>Outcome Met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review district budget constraints for Fiscal Year 2019. ● Study the future sustainability of the position of Discipline Supervisor. ● Explore a possible job description for the position of Discipline Supervisor. ● Explore already existing job descriptions within the district in which these responsibilities may be embedded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See previous reports for employment letter of verification ● The district shifted the responsibility solely to the Executive Director of Educational Services who leads the DDAT work.

Strategy 4: Provide and/or Expand Professional Development Opportunities for School Personnel in the Area of Cultural Competency.

Intended Outcome	Steps	Metrics January to June 2021
<p>Deepen staff understanding for applying culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate strategies.</p> <p>Outcome Ongoing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore and/or extend collaborative partnerships with MDE and other outside agencies to provide professional development ● Provide professional development on Restorative Practices that may include, but are not limited to, age appropriate responses to behavior, de-escalation techniques, trauma-informed practices, equitable learning environment and implicit bias ● Provide professional development on the Social Emotional Competencies as prescribed by the MN Department of Education ● Provide targeted professional development for remedial measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See appendix A for presentations titles and various professional development offered to district staff from January to June 2021

Strategy 5: Obtain Qualitative Engagement Data and Input from Parents, Students and Teachers on issues Related to Discipline

Intended Outcome	Steps	Metrics January to June 2021
<p>To obtain and consider information from stakeholders involving discipline to refine discipline practices.</p> <p>Outcome in Progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School climate surveys for parents, students and staff ● Timely communication and input from families regarding discipline ● Obtain input from district committees and focus groups including, but not limited to, World's Best Workforce, American Indian Parent Advisory Committee, Community Education Advisory Committee, the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee, Responsive Classroom Leadership Team, Student Assistance Team, Student WEB and Link Crew Leaders ● Obtain input from Peer Reviewers on targeted remediation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The collection of data and engagement of various stakeholders group continue to happen when the identified groups meet according to the schools' event calendar. Each group is asked to provide feedback for the district to revise or implement equitable practices. ● See appendix C for the district stakeholder survey used to collect feedback from families and students in grade 4-12.

Summary of Progress

Over the past four years Columbia Heights Public Schools has seen more than a sixty-five percent decrease in the total number of out-of-school suspensions. During the period of January 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021 we had four (4) suspensions. Three of the suspension are in the secondary program and one suspension from the elementary program.

While we do not want to suspend any student, the offenses committed merited suspension and the students received support and counseling, see attached Appendix B. The district commitment to providing professional development in a series that builds on previous content learned is helping staff to grow their cultural competence. In 2021 staff were coached on becoming a “warm demander.” Each member of the District Discipline Assessment Team reported monthly on the progress observed at their school site.

The district will continue to implement and sustain proven practices that work beyond the life of the settlement agreement. We are continuing to monitor and adjust the support provided to staff to ensure that they are embedding new learning in their daily work. Given last year’s learning model, and this year’s return to in person learning we will continue with agreed upon tasks

- Monthly District Discipline Assessment Team meetings to analyze data and problem solve on a district level
- Employment of a Discipline Supervisor to help track suspensions and data
- Publication of a common PreK-12 student handbook to help align practices district wide
- Professional development on culturally relevant practices and restorative practices.
- Progress update to the monthly E-12 district meeting.

While we are, and will continuously be, focused on further reducing the number of suspensions across the district, our District Discipline Assessment Team, comprised of stakeholders from all buildings and departments, has largely turned our focus to continuing to reduce the disproportionalities of suspensions among racial and ethnic groups and different educational settings. We are working to accomplish the goal of erasing our disproportionalities by following the steps outlined in our settlement agreement with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. There are a few strategies that we have found to be very useful, both anecdotally and quantitatively as supported by our behavior data. A few of these strategies are listed in the table below.

Strategies	Implemented or new (I or N)
Implementation of the Innocent Classroom curriculum at Highland Elementary with the hopes to expand the program to more buildings in the future.	I
Working with the Director of Special Education to find therapists who speak the home language of some of our most vulnerable students.	I
Strengthening our partnership with Lee Carlson Center for Mental Health & Well Being to provide mental health services directly to students in their school building.	I

A strong focus on providing professional development on trauma informed practices to best support all students and to better understand that each student comes to us with a lifetime of their own lived experiences that we must honor and recognize.	I
Professional Development on the prevalence of racial bias in schools and how it impacts students of color.	I
Redesigning the school's behavior room into a welcoming place with a caring adult.	N
Implementation of Restorative Practices by focusing professional development on district leadership team and school level leadership teams	N
Participation in the Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL) Academy	N

Although we have seen some success in reducing the number of out of school suspensions however, we know that we have work to do to reduce the disproportionalities of our suspensions. This is work that we are committed to seeing through until we have solved the problem and fully achieved our mission of creating worlds of opportunity for each and every learner.

Section 2: Appendices

Appendix A:

- CHPS Report Metrics

Appendix B

- Suspension Data from July 2020 through December 2020 is attached in the Metrics Section and includes the following student information.

Fortunately, there is no suspension in this first half of the year:

- Date
- Race, ethnicity, national origin
- Gender
- SPED Y/N
- Reason for suspension
- Length of suspension
- Instructional setting

Appendix C

- Stakeholder survey from families and students in grades 4-12

**Appendix A:
Columbia Heights Public School
Semi-Annual Discipline Report Metrics
January 2021–June 2021**

District Discipline Assessment Team 2020-2021

Team Members:

- Nathan Meyer, North Park Elementary Assistant Principal
- Teresa Fenske, Valley View Elementary Assistant Principal
- John Kulick, Highland Elementary Assistant Principal
- Rick Ostby, Columbia Academy Assistant Principal
- Leslee Sherk, Columbia Academy Assistant Principal
- Matt Miller, Columbia Heights High School Assistant Principal
- Bondo Nyembwe, Executive Director of Educational Services/District Discipline Supervisor
- John Fry, Director of Special Education
- Disa Fabeck, Assessment and Gifted & Talented Coordinator

Meeting Dates and Topics:

1/7/2021	Provide feedback to stakeholders' survey, warm demander update, review behavior data,
2/4/2021	Mid-year Diversion Committee update, warm demander update (identify two allies), Discuss strategies for supporting students in person, Discuss school climate survey and stakeholder survey update, progress update on school goal.
3/4/2021	MDHR updates, sharing success stories on becoming a warm demander, review stakeholders survey data summary.
4/8/2021	Discuss Restorative Practice PD, discuss non-exclusionary discipline practices, review discipline data, discuss Students Rights and Responsivities Handbook
5/6/2021	Updates on diversion committee, RP, review suspension data and discuss root cause, Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook updates

Relevant Professional Development topics January – June 2021

1/19/2021	Equity Book Club (<i>How to Be an Antiracist</i> ; <i>Me and White Supremacy</i> ; and <i>So You Want to Talk About Race</i> . Books will be provided) 6 R's Reflection
2/8/2021	Teaching and Learning Leadership: But for barriers
3/8/2021	Teaching and Learning Leadership: Showing up for racial justice

4/19/2021	Cultural Competency; Justice Is Not Optional: Learning to Speak and Teach About Intersectional Racial Equity
5/17/2021	Teaching and Learning Leadership: Avoiding Equity Detours

E12 Administrative Team Meetings

January - June 2021

Team Members:

- Zena Stenvik, Superintendent
- Bryan Hennekens, Director of Security, Technology, and Buildings Operations
- Bondo Nyembwe, Executive Director of Educational Services
- Denise Sundstrom, Director of Finance and Operations
- Lindsey Bennett, Director of Human Resources
- Kristen Stuenkel, Director of Community Education and Communications
- Tara Thukral, Director of Teaching and Learning
- John Fry, Director of Special Education
- Jeff Cacek, North Park Elementary Principal
- Jason Kuhlmann, Valley View Elementary Principal
- Michelle Janke, Highland Elementary Principal
- Duane Berkas, Columbia Academy Principal
- Dan Wroblecki, Columbia Heights High School Principal

Meeting Dates when Discipline Supervisor Presented:

- January 14, 2021
- February 11, 2021
- March 18, 2021
- April 15, 2021
- May 13, 2021
- June 17, 2021

Looking Forward: Strategy Five

Strategy 5: Obtain Qualitative Engagement Data and Input from Parents, Students, and Teachers on Issues Related to Discipline

From January through May 2021 our District Discipline Assessment Team continued to learn the process of becoming a “Warm Demander” and continued to discuss and cultivate warm demanders. The Warm Demander concept is highlighted in the book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students* by Zaretta Hammond. We have used the concept of the Warm Demander to help adults connect and build strong relationships with students during the pandemic to engage at a higher level in the virtual classroom.

In August 2021 our district leadership team and school level leadership teams participated in the Culturally Responsive School Leadership Academy held at Richfield High School. The participants learned to review school practices through an equity lens by looking the history of the school they serve in, school level data, community epistemologies and relevance of school practices toward students. The training provided resources to guide the leaders to measure progress over time.

Columbia Heights Public Schools began implementing Restorative Practices by providing training to members of the District Discipline Assessment Team (DDAT). The DDAT members discussed and selected Restorative Practices approach in their monthly meeting as a next step to support students to belong and succeed in school. In June a few social workers and Assistant Principals and the Executive Director of Educational Services participated in the Repairing harm training. In August Nancy Riestenberg trained 30 staff members which included principals, assistant principals, directors, coordinators and deans of students in the process of guiding circles and whole school implementation.

Columbia Heights Public Schools is redesigning the behavior rooms in all the schools. The redesign process began with renaming the behavior room to “School Success Room” (SSR). Each School Success Room has a School Success Coach to attend every student and guide them to reenter the classroom successfully and prevent suspensions. The district received a grant to support with the redesign and training for all the School Success Coaches and school staff. The redesign process includes creating a welcoming space that is inviting and calming for students to receive Social Emotional and academic support prior to reentering the classroom.

**Appendix B:
Columbia Heights Public Schools
Suspension Data
January 2021 - June 2021**

Student Name	Gender	Grade	Incident Role	Incident Date	Violation	Disposition	Disposition Start Date	Disposition End Date	Resolved Race/Ethnicity
Student 1	Male	10	Offender	4/5/2021	Illegal Drugs	Out-of-school Suspension	4/5/2021	4/7/2021	Black or African American
Student 2	Female	6	Offender	5/26/2021	Fighting	Out-of-school Suspension	5/27/2021	5/27/2021	Black or African American
Student 3	Female	7	Offender	5/26/2021	Fighting	Out-of-school Suspension	5/27/2021	5/27/2021	Black or African American
Student 4	Male	3	Offender	6/1/2021	Harassment	Out-of-school Suspension	6/2/2021	6/3/2021	White

Appendix C:
Columbia Heights Public Schools
Stakeholders survey
January 2021 - June 2021

Stakeholders input survey on issues related to Discipline

* Required

1. What is your school name? *

Mark only one oval.

- Highland parent
- Highland student
- Valley View Parent
- Valley View student
- North Park student
- North Park Parent
- CA student
- CA parent
- 9th Gr
- 10th Gr
- 11th Gr
- 12th Gr
- CHHS parent
- Special Education Advisory group

2. Do you know how the discipline process works in our school? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

3. Are you familiar with the Student Rights and Responsibility handbook? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

4. The discipline process in our school is fair for all students. *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

5. Is there a group/s for which the discipline process is not fair? check all that apply *

Mark only one oval.

Black students

White students

Asian students

Hispanic students

Two or more races

No group

All groups

Unsure or I do not know

6. Do discipline incidents in our school get resolved on time? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

7. Does the school personnel communicate with you (teacher or parent) whenever there is a behavior problem? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

8. What is one change you would like to recommend for our school discipline process?
*

9. What is your race/ethnicity? *

Mark only one oval.

- Black or African American
- White
- Asian
- Hispanic or Latino
- American Indian or Alaskan native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander
- Two or more races

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